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FM AMEMBASSY LUANDA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5852  
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY 4071  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LUANDA 000760

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/16/2029  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [AO](#) [CG](#)  
SUBJECT: ANGOLA SEEKS STABILITY IN DRC

REF: A. KINSHASA 1084  
[1](#)B. LUANDA 747 AND PREVIOUS

(U) Classified by Ambassador Dan Mozena, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. In a series of meetings with AFRICOM Deputy Commander Ambassador Tony Holmes, Angola's top defense decision-makers were categorical: the GRA's primary objective in the DRC is stability, and Angola has nothing to do with ongoing security incidents in Congo's Equateur province (Ref A). In conversations with Holmes, Angolan defense officials expressed concern about President Kabila and his entourage and worried that poor Congolese military leadership negated Angolan military training efforts in DRC. They made clear, however, that the primary irritant in the relationship - the issue of illegal immigration and recent reciprocal expulsions (Ref B) - is being resolved through diplomatic means. Interestingly, potential disputes over maritime boundaries did not figure in the concerns raised during Holmes's meetings. Based on what we know at this point, we are inclined to take the GRA at its word; Angola has much to lose, and little to gain, by whipping up rebellion in its neighbor's backyard, which would undercut the stability in DRC it seeks. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) In a series of meetings with AFRICOM's Ambassador Tony Holmes December 15-16, Angolan defense officials made clear that the GRA's top priority in the DRC is stability. Acting Defense Minister Gaspar Rufino told Holmes on December 16 that Angola was concerned about the current situation in the DRC and noted that "instability in Congo affects all of us." On December 15, the Chief of Staff of the Angolan Armed Forces (Forcas Armadas Angolanas - FAA) General Francisco Furtado similarly emphasized the importance the Angolan military attaches to stability in its northern neighbor.

[1](#)3. (C) Both Rufino and Furtado dismissed out of hand any suggestion that Angola was involved in the recent, murky, happenings in the Dongo region in Equateur province. Furtado opined that the troubles in Equateur province were tribal in nature and noted that "some see a connection with other forces within the Republic of Congo." While Equateur was "far from our border," Furtado said Angola is following developments there closely. The Angolan defense establishment, he said, is particularly worried as Equateur is flaring up just as pacification is beginning to take hold in the East. The FAA had had some early reports of FARDC action in Dongo, the death of one FARDC officer there, and the possible capture by rebels of a GRDC vessel carrying military supplies. Furtado thought the involvement of former FARDC soldiers trained by Angola highly unlikely, as the units trained by the Angolan military mission had not been assigned to the region.

[1](#)4. (C) While the Angolans may be frustrated with Kinshasa, our interlocutors gave no indication that the GRA had decided

to withdraw support from Kabila. Over dinner with Ambassador Holmes, Vice Minister of Defense Agostinho Nelumba "Sanjar" did complain that Kabila is heavily influenced by "Mobutu-ists." (Note: Not a compliment in an Angolan context.) Sanjar also observed that Congo's weak executive left Kabila overly dependent on the Mobutu-ists in the Congolese parliament.

¶5. (C) Furtado expressed disappointment with the results of the Angolan military training mission in Congo. Angola had trained three brigades at a base in Kitona in western DRC and was working with a fourth. The FAA had also trained a commando battalion in Angola in 2004, the last time any Congolese soldiers were trained in Angola. All told, Angola had instructed some 14,000 FARDC soldiers, Furtado said. However, much of this effort seemed for naught as poor Congolese leadership and endemic FARDC logistical, pay, and morale issues sapped the strength of Angolan-trained units almost immediately. Furtado complained that that FARDC units essentially disintegrated within months of training, and some FARDC soldiers returned to factional forces as soon as the training was completed. Of three companies of the commando battalion, for example, the FARDC could only currently account for one.

¶6. (C) Defense officials insisted to Ambassador Holmes that from the Angolan perspective the key bilateral issue between DRC and Angola was illegal immigration and the recent tit-for-tat round of expulsions from both countries. As do all official Angolans, acting Defense Minister Rufino drew a clear distinction between Angola's "justified" expulsion of illegal immigrants and the DRC's "retaliation" against

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long-time Angolan residents in DRC. As Rufino put it to Holmes, "Angola doesn't expel, we repatriate." Furtado spoke to Holmes at length about the threat represented by illegal DRC immigrants in Angola's diamond mining regions and highlighted the vital role the diamonds smuggled from the same region played in keeping UNITA afloat during the civil war. Rufino and Furtado both stressed, however, that the tensions over immigration and expulsion were being resolved through diplomatic means. Furtado noted that the Angola-DRC binational commission was meeting the same day to take up the issue. (Note: The FAA's intelligence chief, who attended the December 16 meeting with Holmes, was wearing a pass for the talks, which suggests that the Angolans are sending some of the right people to participate.)

¶7. (C) Comment. Angola has a long and tangled involvement with the DRC. However, based on what we know at this point, we are inclined to believe the Angolans when they say they want stability in the DRC. Among Angola's primary security objectives are ending the flow of illegal immigrants from the DRC into the diamond mining provinces of Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul and keeping unrest from infecting its sensitive Cabinda province and other border areas; neither are served by stirring up the pot in Equateur or creating further instability in the DRC. Interestingly, neither Furtado nor Rufino cited maritime boundaries disputes with DRC - which could potentially impact Angola's rich offshore oil fields - as a significant security concern. End Comment.  
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